

# Emergency Services Guidelines



Approved by Chambers County Commissioner's Court on  
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# Table of Contents

- I. General Guidelines
- II. Communications
- III. Emergency Traffic
- IV. Standard Operating Guidelines/Procedures
- V. Incident Management System
- VI. County Response to Emergency Incidents
- VII. EMS Grant Funding Program Guidelines

## Appendix A

State Transportation Code Relating to Emergency Traffic

## Appendix B

Incident Command System (ICS) Example

## Appendix C

Complaint Policy



# Emergency Services Guidelines

## **Definitions**

**Departments** – Fire Departments, Volunteer Fire Departments, EMS Departments, and First Responder Organizations.

**County** - Chambers County

**Court** – Chambers County Commissioner's Court

## **Purpose**

Outlines Guidelines applicable to all Departments which respond to, or are based in, unincorporated areas of Chambers County, and/or that receive funding from Chambers County.

## **I. General Guidelines**

- A. Departments must follow all federal, state, and local laws.
- B. Departments must follow the laws set forth by regulatory agencies applicable to the departments.
- C. Departments will respond to calls for service within their respective coverage areas as outlined by Chambers County Emergency Services Coverage Areas Map.
- D. Departments must maintain mutual aid agreements with Fire, EMS, and FRO Departments which neighbor their coverage areas (within Chambers County).
- E. Departments must strive to maintain good working relationships within their own departments and among other departments.
- F. Departments must conduct training on a regular basis in order to improve and maintain the necessary skills related to the services which they provide.
- G. Departments covering unincorporated areas of Chambers County must obtain approval from Chambers County Commissioner's Court in order to operate and/or conduct 911 services within Chambers County.
- H. Departments must obtain approval from Chambers County Commissioner's Court in order to be dispatched by Chambers County.
- I. Departments must comply with Chambers County Emergency Services Guidelines in order to receive funding from Chambers County.
- J. Any Fire and/or EMS related requests made to Chambers County must be directed through the Chambers County Emergency Services Coordinator.

## **II. Communications**

### **A. Purpose**

The purpose of this guideline is to ensure departments operate on the county communications system with uniformity.

### **B. Chain of Command**

If a Department has a request for a dispatch procedural change, pertaining to Fire & EMS, the issue should be forwarded to the Emergency Services Coordinator. If a Department has a complaint pertaining to dispatch, the issue should be forwarded to the Sheriff. Any complaint submitted must include, at a minimum, name of person submitting complaint, time and date of occurrence, and specific information regarding the event. Departments should contact dispatch directly regarding emergency situations or immediate needs such as radio malfunction, pagers not going off, fax machine trouble, etc.

### **C. Acquisition of Equipment**

It is the responsibility of each Fire/EMS Department to acquire the communications equipment necessary to perform their respective duties. As in the past, the County may provide assistance when possible.

### **D. County Operated Systems**

The two county-owned and maintained systems available for Fire/EMS use are VHF Primary and the 800mhz trunking system.

E. Fire/EMS 800mhz radios will have the following talkgroups:

- **EMS/FIRE** (Designated 800mhz Primary Fire & EMS dispatch talkgroup)
- **ES-1** (ES-1 through ES-5 are designated for Fire & EMS scene communications)
- **ES-2**
- **ES-3**
- **ES-4**
- **ES-5**
- **SPECIAL EVENT** (Designated as countywide common talkgroup among Fire, EMS, Law Enforcement, Emergency Management, etc., used to coordinate major incidents)
- **LE-1** (LE-1 and LE-2 are for Law Enforcement dispatch)
- **MBFD** (Primary dispatch for Mont Belvieu Fire/EMS)
- **BFD 1** (A16) (Primary dispatch for Baytown Fire/EMS)
- **BFD 2** (A15) (Baytown Fire/EMS scene channel)
- **BTAC 6** (A12) Baytown Fire/EMS tac/scene channel)
- **HCEMS** (Harris Co. EMS, used for communications with Baytown Hospitals)
- **HCMUA1** (Harris. Co. Mutual Aid 1)
- **HCMUA2** (Harris. Co. Mutual Aid 2 - both can be used for LifeFlight contact)
- **TALKA** (Chambers Co. TalkAround - Simplex direct channel).
- **BACKUP** (future 800mhz backup repeater)

- **8CALL** (800mhz Intercity calling channel. 8CALL and 8TAC1 are on county tower)
- **8TAC1** (8TAC1 through 8TAC4 are 800mhz Intercity tac channels)
- **8TAC2**
- **8TAC3**
- **8TAC4**

F. Fire/EMS VHF radios should include the following channels as a minimum:

- Chambers County VHF Primary
- Chambers County Fire/Rescue Repeater
- Fire/Rescue Scene 1/Tac 1 (simplex) 154.265
- Fire/Rescue Scene 2/Tac 2 (simplex) 154.415
- Fire Mutual Aid 154.280 (LifeFlight contact)

Other recommended VHF Channels for Interoperability are:

- **Texas Law 1:** analog wideband VHF coordination channel for mobile-to-mobile use by emergency personnel on a scene or incident
- **Texas Law 2:** analog wideband VHF calling channel for mobile-to-base use by transient or en-route emergency personnel
- **Texas Law 3:** National analog wideband VHF channel for coordination of law enforcement activities
- **Texas Fire 1, Texas Fire 2, Texas Fire 3,** analog wideband VHF frequencies primarily for fire service use or for use as dictated by Incident Commander on incidents
- **Texas Medical 1,** analog wideband VHF frequency primarily for use by EMS agency personnel on incidents
- **Texas Air 2,** analog wideband VHF frequency for air-to-ground use with state or federal aircraft only at direction of Incident Commander on incidents.

### **VHF 150 MHz Wideband Interoperability Channels (Mobile and Portable Configuration)**

\*Texas Air 1 is reserved and not available for use in this plan

This channel plan establishes specific labels for VHF wideband channels to assure consistent use throughout the state. These labels are listed below and all participating agencies should use these labels if possible. Alphanumeric radio displays should be consistent with the examples listed below depending on each radio's capability. Any reference to previous identifiers (for example "Intercity") should be removed from the radio display.

- 3-Digit – TL1 / TF1 / TM1 / TA2
- 6-Digit – TEX L1 / TEX F1 / TEX M1 / TEX A2
- 8-Digit – TEX LAW1 / TEXTFIRE1 / TEX MED1 / TEX AIR2
- 10-Digit – TEXAS LAW1 / TEXAS FIRE1 / TEXAS MED1 / TEXAS AIR2

<b>Receive</b>	<b>Transmit</b>	<b>CTCSS/PL</b>	<b>Label</b>	<b>Use</b>
154.950	154.950	Carrier Squelch	<b>Texas Law 1</b>	Calling channel, on-site, mobile to mobile
155.370	154.950	127.3 TX only	<b>Texas Law 2</b>	Calling channel, to contact base stations
155.475	155.475	127.3 TX & RX	<b>Texas Law 3</b>	On-scene tactical - command channel
154.280	154.280	127.3 TX & RX	<b>Texas Fire 1</b>	On-scene tactical - command channel
154.265	154.265	127.3 TX & RX	<b>Texas Fire 2</b>	On-scene tactical - command channel
154.295	154.295	127.3 TX & RX	<b>Texas Fire 3</b>	On-scene tactical - command channel
155.340	155.340	127.3 TX & RX	<b>Texas Med 1</b>	On-scene tactical - command channel
151.385	151.385	127.3 TX & RX	<b>Texas Air 2</b>	Air-to-Ground communications <b>with state and federal aircraft ONLY</b>

#### **G. Calls for Service (Pageouts)**

1. Fire/EMS Departments dispatched via Chambers County will be dispatched simultaneously on VHF Primary and the 800mhz Primary Emergency Services talkgroup (EMS/FIRE).
2. Departments will use the 800mhz EMS/FIRE talkgroup for communications with dispatch.
3. It is recommended that Departments keep a VHF radio in at least one department vehicle for Interoperability/backup purposes, and helicopter ground contact.
4. Fire/EMS departments may not “self-dispatch” to calls. If a Fire/EMS department receives an emergency call via any method besides dispatch, the department should obtain the name of the caller, phone number, address of incident, nature of incident, and time incident occurred. The Fire/EMS department should then advise the caller that help is on the way, but to hang up and dial 911. The department should then advise dispatch of the situation and respond to the emergency if it is within their coverage area/district. If the department receives a “walk-in” patient at their facility, the same information should be obtained, and the department must still notify dispatch so they can officially page the call. This procedure must be followed in order for case/incident numbers to be assigned.
5. When dispatch pages an EMS Department for an MVA, they should page the corresponding Fire Department as well. The first arriving EMS or Fire unit may determine Fire Department response is not needed and advise dispatch to disregard that department.

#### **H. Radio Usage**

All departments should use plain language when communicating with dispatch. The following are acceptable/recommended radio terms:

**Enroute** - used to check enroute to/from locations

**On Scene** - used to state arrival on scene

**Disregard** - indicates the unit is to disregard the message or call

**In Service** - indicates a unit is in service/available for call

**Out of Service** - indicates a unit is out of service/unavailable for call

**Stable** - used to indicate a stable patient

**Unstable** - used to indicate an unstable patient

**Patient Contact** – used to indicate patient contact by medics

1. All units must remember to pause before speaking after keying the radio mic on the 800mhz system and wait for the “double-blip” before speaking. Failure to do so will cause the first part of the radio message to be lost.
2. Units should begin radio traffic by stating their unit number, followed by the unit number of the unit they are trying to contact, followed by the radio traffic. For example, "7101 to 7102, how do you read this unit?"
3. All units should also be familiar with the military style calling protocol, which begins with the unit number you are calling, followed by your own unit number. For example, “7102 this is 7101” or “Command from Operations”. During major events where state or federal coordination takes place, this will most likely be the calling format utilized.
4. All units should use a normal voice level, speed, and tone when communicating on the radio.
5. Responding units should check "enroute" with Chambers County by clearly stating their unit numbers (ex. "7210 Enroute").
6. If a unit has important radio traffic for dispatch, they should confirm that dispatch received the information, by either waiting for dispatch to acknowledge receipt of the message, or calling again on the radio to confirm dispatch receipt of the message. Never assume something was heard if you do not receive confirmation.
7. All units should listen carefully during emergencies to avoid interrupting other units with radio traffic. For example, if a unit is contacting dispatch, another unit should not interrupt with radio traffic unless it is an emergency. Common rules of person to person conversational etiquette should apply on the radio as well.
8. All units must exercise courtesy, politeness and professionalism at all times when communicating on the radio systems.
9. All units should only use the minimum amount of radio traffic that is necessary to convey the message. Some pieces of radio traffic may be unnecessary and will only congest the system. The radio user should decide if the traffic is relevant before saying it on the radio. Many times, other units can wait for a unit to get on scene and give a size-up before congesting the system by asking multiple questions.
10. Fire/EMS Departments may not use LE-1 or LE-2 unless requested to do so by dispatch.

#### **I. Scene Size-Ups**

1. The first arriving unit on the scene of an emergency should give a scene size-up to dispatch as soon as possible.
2. An MVA size-up should include number of vehicles involved, number of patients, patient contact, severity of patients (stable, unstable), and additional resources needed.
3. A medical call size-up should include number of patients, patient contact, stability of patients, and additional resources needed.
4. A Fire scene size-up should include severity of incident, and additional resources needed.
5. Operations and scene communications should be moved to a “scene” channel as soon as possible. All operations traffic should be conducted on an 800mhz ES channel. Operations/scene traffic should not occur on primary dispatch channels. The Incident Commander should handle communications with dispatch. Likewise, units on scene

should direct any messages for dispatch through the Incident Commander. Dispatch may request that communications move to a scene/ES channel, or the IC may inform dispatch that all units will be moving to a scene/ES channel.

**J. Air Transport**

1. The on-scene medic in charge of patient care will determine the need (according to local protocol) for helicopter transport to a trauma center.
2. When the request is made for a helicopter, the unit making the request should inform dispatch of which agency they are requesting, the unit number of the designated ground contact, and the contact channel to be used.

**LifeFlight** – VHF Mutual Aid

800mhz HC Mutual Aid 1 or 2

**GoldStar** – VHF Mutual Aid

800mhz HC Mutual Aid 1 or 2

**PHI** – VHF Mutual Aid

\*Be sure to specify whether you are using VHF or 800mhz when designating the ground contact channel.

3. The associated fire department of the EMS working the scene should be paged for landing zone support.

**K. Disregarding Units**

1. Once a Fire/EMS Department is dispatched to an emergency, the department will not be considered disregarded until a unit from the Fire/EMS Department arrives on scene and advises the department may disregard. However, if a law enforcement officer determines the scene to be unsafe, is detaining subjects, or placing them in custody, Fire/EMS must stage at a safe distance, until the scene is secure, if that officer deems it necessary.
2. Any unit requesting that other units disregard should make that request to dispatch. In turn, dispatch will actually disregard the responding units.

**L. Dispatch Times (Tone Times)**

Dispatch will log tone times for each department. Dispatch will then fax these times to the proper department's station at the conclusion of the call. Each department should ensure dispatch is provided with a current fax number.

**M. Radio Unit Numbers**

All Fire/EMS Departments who operate regularly on a communications system owned and maintained by the county will use radio unit numbers assigned by the county. All requests for radio unit numbers, by a department, will be made to the Emergency Services Coordinator. Each department will be assigned a “bank” of numbers from which they will assign individual member unit numbers as they see fit. Departments should keep the county informed of current individual radio unit number assignments and 800mhz radio assignments.



Individual unit numbers consist of four digits. The first digit indicates Fire or EMS, the second digit indicates the department, and the last two numbers indicate the individual department unit. For example, 8201 = 8 (Fire Dept.), 2 (Winnie), 01 (unit 01).

4501 – 4599 Mont Belvieu EMS (city assigned)

7100 - 7199 Anahuac EMS

7200 - 7299 Winnie EMS

7351 – 7372 Smith Point AED Team

7500 – 7599 County Emergency Services

7800 - 7899 Trinity Bay EMS Sta. 8

7900 - 7999 Trinity Bay EMS Sta. 9

8001 – 8099 Mont Belvieu VFD

8100 – 8199 Anahuac VFD

8200 – 8299 Winnie VFD

8300 – 8399 Smith Point VFD

8400 – 8499 Oak Island/DB VFD

8500 – 8599 Hankamer VFD

8600 – 8699 Old River VFD

8700 – 8799 Wallisville VFD

8800 – 8899 Beach City VFD

8900 – 8999 Cove VFD

#### **N. Recommended Apparatus Unit Numbers**

Apparatus numbers begin with a prefix and end with a number. The number designates the particular department and the number of the apparatus. For example, Engine 61 indicates an Engine for Old River-WinfreeVFD. Engine 62 would designate a second engine for Old River-Winfree VFD.

**Medic** - Prefix for Ambulances

**Engine** - Prefix for Fire Engines

**Tanker** - Prefix for Tankers

**Brush/Booster** - Prefix for Brush Trucks

**Squad/Responder** - Prefix for First Response Vehicles

**Rescue** - Prefix for Rescue Vehicles

### **III. Emergency Traffic**

- A. Departments operating emergency vehicle traffic within Chambers County should develop a standard operating guideline for the department, which regulates the operation of emergency vehicles by its members. Emphasis should be placed on safe driving practices while operating an emergency vehicle.
- B. Department units operating emergency traffic within Chambers County must adhere to state laws regulating emergency vehicles. See Appendix A for references from the State Transportation Code.

### **IV. Standard Operating Guidelines/Procedures**

Departments should prepare and adopt a procedures manual for providing services so as to ensure that the Department operates and provides such services safely and in compliance with all applicable laws.

### **V. Incident Management System**

- A. Departments should develop and maintain an incident management system. The system should include a written standard operating procedure for the management of emergency incidents. The system should require operations to be conducted in a manner that recognizes hazards and prevents accidents and injuries.
- B. Departments should require all personnel to be trained in and to use the incident management system.
- C. The incident management system should be compliant with the National Incident Management System (NIMS). NIMS may be accessed from the Chambers County Emergency Services website at <http://www.co.chambers.tx.us/offices/emsPage.mht> or the FEMA website at <http://www.fema.gov/nims/index.shtm>.
- D. Please see Appendix B for a simplified ICS example.
- E. Departments should be familiar with the Chambers County Emergency Management Plan. Copies of the plan may be obtained from the Emergency Management Coordinator.

### **VI. County Response to Emergency Incidents**

Chambers County Emergency Management/Emergency Services may respond, emergency traffic, to Fire and/or EMS related incidents in Chambers County, for the purposes of observation, incident command, or to assist the local departments with their efforts. The County will only serve as incident command until the arrival of the respective Department. Upon arrival of the appropriate Department, command will be transferred to that Department.

## **VII. EMS Grant Funding Program Guidelines**

### **A. Purpose**

The purpose of the EMS Grant Funding Program (“Program”) is to provide better and more efficient EMS services to the citizens of Chambers County.

### **B. Objective**

The primary objective of the Program is to provide funding to some of the existing, non-profit, 911 service provider, EMS departments based in Chambers County, which cover unincorporated areas of Chambers County, for the implementation of full time, paid personnel. The funding under this Program is not intended to replace any EMS department’s budget, but to supplement existing efforts.

### **C. Source of Funds and Limitation of Funds**

The funding of this Program comes from a special sales tax in Chambers County. The funding of this Program will be limited to the amount of money raised by this tax, and in no event, will the funding exceed the amount collected on this sales tax.

### **D. Applicants (Regular Funding)**

Each year, Applicants may apply for funds under this Program by completing and submitting an application to the Emergency Services Coordinator at Chambers County. The Emergency Services Coordinator will present each application to the Commissioner’s Court for approval. The Commissioner’s Court will be responsible for choosing which applications will be accepted. Applications will be accepted on an annual basis. The Commissioner’s Court will decide on the amount of accepted Applicants based on its assessment of the need and demand for EMS services in Chambers County. The Commissioner’s Court will limit the amount of accepted Applicants each year in such a way as to meet its objective and to fulfill the purpose of this Program. This number may change from year to year based on the amount of funds available, demands in a particular district within Chambers County, and the availability of qualified Applicants.

### **E. Acceptable Uses of Funds**

Each successful Applicant must use the funds for (1) implementing a First Responder’s Program; (2) implementing paid EMS personnel; (3) payroll expenses; (4) purchasing EMS supplies and equipment; (5) purchasing EMS vehicles, and any expenses related to the maintenance and use of these vehicles; (6) purchasing communication equipment; (7) administrative costs; and (8) other uses to be declared acceptable by the Commissioner’s Court at a later date.

### **F. Disbursement of Funds**

The Commissioner’s Court will provide funding to the accepted Applicants four times per year (i.e., quarterly). The total amount of the disbursements to the accepted Applicants will be determined by the Commissioner’s Court on an annual basis. When determining the amount of disbursements, the Commissioner’s Court may, at its discretion, reserve part of the sales tax money to help pay its administrative costs

associated with this Program. The Commissioner's Court may also, at its discretion, reserve a part of the sales tax money to create a contingency fund. In no event however, will the amount of money reserved be used for expenditures inconsistent with the Program's purpose and objective. All expenditures shall be for, or related to medical services for citizens of Chambers County.

**G. Amount of Disbursement**

The Commissioner's Court anticipates disbursing the funds equally among the accepted Applicants within Chambers County. However, the Commissioner's Court may disburse the funds unequally if it is determined that the need and demand for EMS services is greater in one district than other districts. The Commissioner's Court may look to objective factors such as population size, EMS demands within Chambers County, and other relevant factors to help make this determination.

**H. Audits**

The County may audit the records of the Applicants to ensure that all expenditures are being made properly and in accordance with the purpose of this Program. In addition, each accepted Applicant may be required to submit invoices and receipts of items purchased with the funds, or other documents as the County may request.

**I. Services to be Performed by Successful Applicant**

In consideration for receiving the funds under this Program, each accepted Applicant must staff one (1) certified medic at all times, 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, each day of the year. The certified medic must be "on-call" at all times, and ready to be dispatched quickly to any location in their respective district. Each accepted Applicant must prove compliance with this requirement.

**J. Day Medic Guideline**

The purpose of a "day medic" is to provide a second certified medic during daytime hours. An Applicant who receives funding for a "day medic" must meet the additional requirement of staffing a second certified medic at least 56 hours per week, five (5) days per week, Monday through Friday.

**L. Insurance**

Each accepted Applicant must obtain adequate insurance, including without limitation, Automobile, Commercial General Liability and Professional Liability Insurance. Proof of insurance must be submitted to the Emergency Services Coordinator at Chambers County before applications may be accepted.

**M. Registration with State**

Each accepted Applicant must properly register with the State as required by law and provide proof of such registration with the Emergency Services Coordinator at Chambers County before applications may be accepted.

**N. Compliance with State and Federal Laws**

Each accepted Applicant must comply with all state, federal, and local laws, and Texas DSHS regulations, at all times to receive funds under this Program.

**O. Compliance with County Guidelines**

Each accepted Applicant must comply with all Chambers County Emergency Service Guidelines at all times to receive funds under this Program.

**P. Agreement with Chambers County**

An authorized representative of each accepted Applicant must sign an agreement with Chambers County to receive funding under this Program. This agreement will set forth the terms and conditions of this Program in more detail. If an accepted Applicant signs the agreement, receives funding, and then breaches the agreement, the Commissioner's Court may revoke the funds, disqualify the Applicant, and fund another accepted Applicant to cover the disqualified Applicant's district.

**Q. Reporting from the Emergency Services Coordinator**

All Applicants will address questions and concerns with the Emergency Services Coordinator at Chambers County. The Emergency Services Coordinator at Chambers County will keep the Commissioner's Court reasonably informed of issues arising under this Program.

## Appendix A

### TRANSPORTATION CODE CHAPTER 546. OPERATION OF AUTHORIZED EMERGENCY VEHICLES AND CERTAIN OTHER VEHICLES SUBCHAPTER A. AUTHORIZED EMERGENCY VEHICLES

Sec. 546.001. PERMISSIBLE CONDUCT. In operating an authorized emergency vehicle the operator may:

- (1) park or stand, irrespective of another provision of this subtitle;
- (2) proceed past a red or stop signal or stop sign, after slowing as necessary for safe operation;
- (3) exceed a maximum speed limit, except as provided by an ordinance adopted under Section 545.365, as long as the operator does not endanger life or property; and
- (4) disregard a regulation governing the direction of movement or turning in specified directions.

Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 165, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1995.

Sec. 546.002. WHEN CONDUCT PERMISSIBLE. (a) In this section, " police escort" means facilitating the movement of a funeral, oversized or hazardous load, or other traffic disruption for public safety purposes by a peace officer described by Articles 2.12(1)-(4), Code of Criminal Procedure.

(b) Section 546.001 applies only when the operator is:

- (1) responding to an emergency call;
- (2) pursuing an actual or suspected violator of the law;
- (3) responding to but not returning from a fire alarm;
- (4) directing or diverting traffic for public safety purposes; or
- (5) conducting a police escort.

Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 165, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1995. Amended by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 66, Sec. 1, eff. May 16, 2003.

Sec. 546.003. AUDIBLE OR VISUAL SIGNALS REQUIRED. Except as provided by Section 546.004, the operator of an authorized emergency vehicle engaging in conduct permitted by Section 546.001 shall use, at the discretion of the operator in accordance with policies of the department or the local government that employs the operator, audible or visual signals that meet the pertinent requirements of Sections 547.305 and 547.702.

Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 165, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1995.

Sec. 546.004. EXCEPTIONS TO SIGNAL REQUIREMENT.

(a) A volunteer fire fighter who operates a private vehicle as an authorized emergency vehicle may engage in conduct permitted by Section 546.001 only when the fire fighter is using visual signals meeting the pertinent requirements of Sections 547.305 and 547.702.

(b) An authorized emergency vehicle that is operated as a police vehicle is not required to be equipped with or display a red light visible from the front of the vehicle.

(c) A police officer may operate an authorized emergency vehicle for a law enforcement purpose without using the audible or visual signals required by Section 546.003 if the officer is:

(1) responding to an emergency call or pursuing a suspected violator of the law with probable cause to believe that:

(A) knowledge of the presence of the officer will cause the suspect to:

(i) destroy or lose evidence of a suspected felony;

(ii) end a suspected continuing felony before the officer has obtained sufficient evidence to establish grounds for arrest; or

(iii) evade apprehension or identification of the suspect or the suspect's vehicle; or

(B) because of traffic conditions on a multilaned roadway, vehicles moving in response to the audible or visual signals may:

(i) increase the potential for a collision; or

(ii) unreasonably extend the duration of the pursuit; or

(2) complying with a written regulation relating to the use of audible or visible signals adopted by the local government that employs the officer or by the department.

Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 165, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1995.

Sec. 546.005. DUTY OF CARE. This chapter does not relieve the operator of an authorized emergency vehicle from:

(1) the duty to operate the vehicle with appropriate regard for the safety of all persons; or

(2) the consequences of reckless disregard for the safety of others.

Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 165, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1995.

## SUBCHAPTER B. OPERATION OF CERTAIN FIRE-FIGHTING EQUIPMENT

Sec. 546.021. MUTUAL AID ORGANIZATIONS. (a) Two or more businesses whose activities require the maintenance of fire-fighting equipment may form a mutual aid organization in which the member businesses agree to assist each other during an emergency by supplying fire-fighting equipment or services.

(b) The presiding officer or director of an organization formed under this section shall deliver a list to the county fire marshal, or to the commissioners court of a county if the county does not have a fire marshal, in each county in which a member business is located. The list must contain the name of the registered owner and license plate number of each motor vehicle that each member intends to use in supplying fire-fighting equipment or services.

(c) If the county fire marshal or commissioners court determines that the operation of the vehicles on the list is in the public interest and not a threat to public safety, the marshal or court shall approve the list.

(d) On approval of the list by the county fire marshal or commissioners court, a person operating a listed motor vehicle in response to a call for emergency fire-fighting assistance from a member has the rights and restrictions placed by this subtitle on the operator of an authorized emergency vehicle.

(e) A county is not liable for damage to a person or property caused by a person approved by the county under this section to operate a motor vehicle for emergency fire-fighting assistance.

Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 165, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1995.

§ 547.305. RESTRICTIONS ON USE OF LIGHTS. (a) A motor vehicle lamp or illuminating device, other than a headlamp, spotlamp, auxiliary lamp, turn signal lamp, or emergency vehicle or school bus warning lamp, that projects a beam with an intensity brighter than 300 candlepower shall be directed so that no part of the high-intensity portion of the beam strikes the roadway at a distance of more than 75 feet from the vehicle.

(b) Except as expressly authorized by law, a person may not operate or move equipment or a vehicle, other than a police vehicle, with a lamp or device that displays a red light visible from directly in front of the center of the equipment or vehicle.

(c) A person may not operate a motor vehicle equipped with a red, white, or blue beacon, flashing, or alternating light unless the equipment is:

(1) used as specifically authorized by this chapter;

or

(2) a running lamp, headlamp, taillamp, backup lamp, or turn signal lamp that is used as authorized by law.

(d) A vehicle may be equipped with alternately flashing lighting equipment described by Section 547.701 or 547.702 only if the vehicle is:

(1) a school bus;

(2) an authorized emergency vehicle;

(3) a church bus that has the words "church bus" printed on the front and rear of the bus so as to be clearly discernable to other vehicle operators;

(4) a tow truck while under the direction of a law enforcement officer at the scene of an accident or while hooking up to a disabled vehicle on a roadway; or

(5) a tow truck with a mounted light bar which has turn signals and stop lamps in addition to those required by Sections 547.322, 547.323, and 547.324, Transportation Code.

(e) A person may not operate highway maintenance or service equipment, including snow-removal equipment, that is not equipped with lamps or that does not display lighted lamps as required by the standards and specifications adopted by the Texas Department of Transportation.

(f) In this section "tow truck" means a motor vehicle or mechanical device that is adapted or used to tow, winch, or move a disabled vehicle.

Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 165, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1995. Amended by Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 380, § 1, eff. July 1, 1999.

Sec. 547.702. ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS FOR AUTHORIZED EMERGENCY VEHICLES. (a) An authorized emergency vehicle may be equipped with a siren, exhaust whistle, or bell:

(1) of a type approved by the department; and

(2) that emits a sound audible under normal conditions at a distance of at least 500 feet.



(b) The operator of an authorized emergency vehicle shall use the siren, whistle, or bell when necessary to warn other vehicle operators or pedestrians of the approach of the emergency vehicle.

(c) Except as provided by this section, an authorized emergency vehicle shall be equipped with signal lamps that:

- (1) are mounted as high and as widely spaced laterally as practicable;
- (2) display four alternately flashing red lights, two located on the front at the same level and two located on the rear at the same level; and
- (3) emit a light visible at a distance of 500 feet in normal sunlight.

(d) A private vehicle operated by a volunteer firefighter responding to a fire alarm or a medical emergency may, but is not required to, be equipped with signal lamps that comply with the requirements of Subsection (c).

(e) A private vehicle operated by a volunteer firefighter responding to a fire alarm or a medical emergency may be equipped with a signal lamp that is temporarily attached to the vehicle roof and flashes a red light visible at a distance of at least 500 feet in normal sunlight.

(f) A police vehicle may, but is not required to, be equipped with signal lamps that comply with Subsection (c).

Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 165, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1995.

Sec. 545.156. VEHICLE APPROACHED BY AUTHORIZED EMERGENCY VEHICLE. (a) On the immediate approach of an authorized emergency vehicle using audible and visual signals that meet the requirements of Sections 547.305 and 547.702, or of a police vehicle lawfully using only an audible signal, an operator, unless otherwise directed by a police officer, shall:

- (1) yield the right-of-way;
- (2) immediately drive to a position parallel to and as close as possible to the right-hand edge or curb of the roadway clear of any intersection; and
- (3) stop and remain standing until the authorized emergency vehicle has passed.

(b) This section does not exempt the operator of an authorized emergency vehicle from the duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons using the highway.

Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 165, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1995.

Sec. 545.157. PASSING AUTHORIZED EMERGENCY VEHICLE. (a) On approaching a stationary authorized emergency vehicle using visual signals that meet the requirements of Sections 547.305 and 547.702, an operator, unless otherwise directed by a police officer, shall:

- (1) vacate the lane closest to the emergency vehicle when driving on a highway with two or more lanes traveling in the direction of the emergency vehicle; or
- (2) slow to a speed not to exceed:
  - (A) 20 miles per hour less than the posted speed limit when the posted speed limit is 25 miles per hour or more; or
  - (B) five miles per hour when the posted speed limit is less than 25 miles per hour.

(b) A violation of this section is:

- (1) a misdemeanor punishable under Section 542.401;

(2) a misdemeanor punishable by a fine of \$500 if the violation results in property damage; or

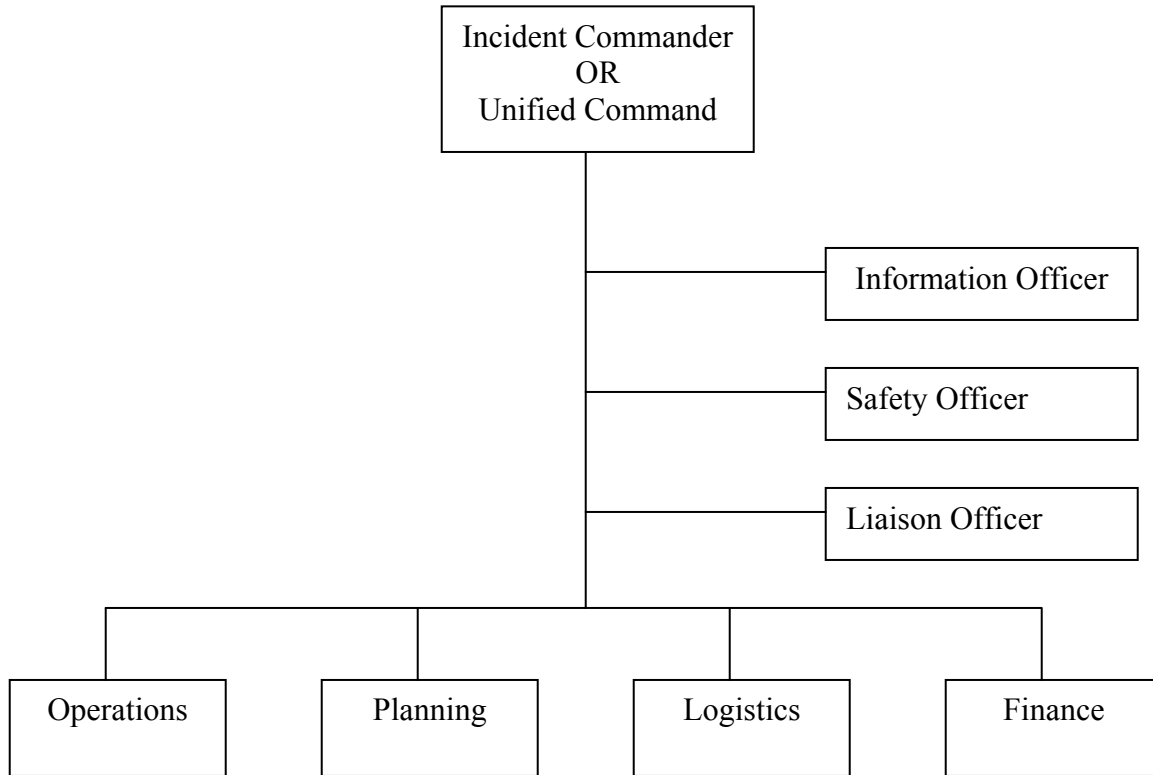
(3) a Class B misdemeanor if the violation results in bodily injury.

(c) If conduct constituting an offense under this section also constitutes an offense under another section of this code or the Penal Code, the actor may be prosecuted under either section or under both sections.

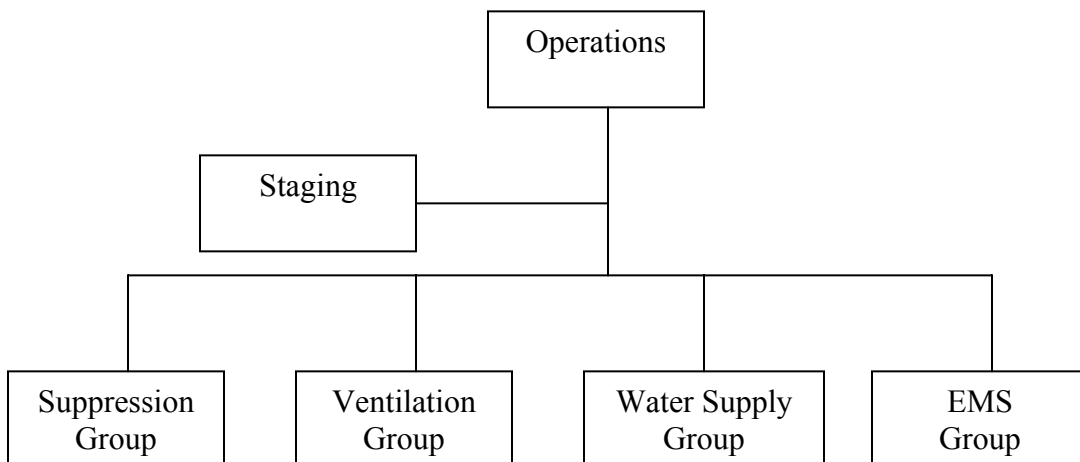
Added by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 327, Sec. 2, eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

## Appendix B

### ICS Organization Charts



### Operations Example



## **Job Descriptions:**

### **Incident Commander**

The IC is ultimately responsible for managing the incident and has the necessary authority to direct all activities at the incident scene.

## **Command Staff**

### **Safety Officer**

The Safety Officer reports directly to the Incident Commander. The Safety Officer is responsible for ensuring that safety issues are managed effectively at the incident scene. The Safety Officer functions as the eyes and ears of the IC for safety, identifying and evaluating hazardous conditions, watching out for unsafe practices, and ensuring that safety procedures are followed. The safety Officer is an advisor to the IC, but has the authority to stop or suspend operations when unsafe situations occur. Reference: NFPA 1500, 1521, and 1561.

### **Liaison Officer**

The Liaison Officer reports directly to the IC. The Liaison Officer is the IC's representative to a point of contact for representatives of outside agencies. During an incident, the IC may not have time to meet directly with everyone who comes to the command post. The Liaison Officer takes the IC's place, obtaining and providing information, or directing people to the proper location or authority.

### **Public Information Officer**

The Public Information Officer reports directly to the IC. The Public Information Officer is responsible for gathering and releasing incident information to the news media and other appropriate agencies.

## **General Staff**

### **Operations Section**

The Operations Section is supervised by an Operations Section Chief who reports directly to the IC. The Operations Section is responsible for the management of all actions that are directly related to controlling the incident. The Operations Section fights the fire, rescues trapped individuals, treats patients, and does whatever else is necessary to alleviate the emergency situation.

### **Planning Section**

The Planning Section is Supervised by a Planning Section Chief who reports directly to the IC. The Planning Section is responsible for the collection, evaluation, dissemination, and use of information relevant to the incident. Individuals assigned to the Planning Section examine the situation, review available information, predict the probable course of events, and prepare recommendations for strategies and tactics.

### **Logistics Section**

The Logistics Section is supervised by a Logistics Section Chief who reports directly to the IC. The Logistics Section is responsible for providing supplies, services, facilities, and materials during the incident.

### **Finance/Administration Section**

The Finance/Administration Section is supervised by a Finance/Administration Section Chief who reports directly to the IC. This section is responsible for the accounting and financial aspects of an incident, as well as any legal issues that may arise. This function is not staffed at most incidents, because cost and accounting issues are usually addressed after the incident. However, this section may be needed at large-scale incidents.

### **Divisions, Groups, and Branches**

Divisions, Groups, and Branches may be organized at an incident to group single resources and/or crews under one supervisor (Division Supervisor, Group Supervisor, and Branch Director).

**Division** – Refers to companies and/or crews working in the same geographic area. Example: Divisions A, B, C, and D may each be assigned to one of the four exterior sides of a building, while Divisions 1, 2, and 3 may each be assigned to work on floors 1, 2, or 3 of a multi-story building.

**Group** – Refers to companies and/or crews working on the same task or objective, but not necessarily in the same location. Example: Ventilation group, search and rescue group, or water supply group.

**Branch** – A Branch is a higher level of combined resources than divisions, groups, and sectors. In large-scale situations, the IC may establish branches to place a higher level supervisor (Branch Director) in charge of a number of divisions, groups, and/or sectors.

### **ICS Implementation**

Someone should be in command of every incident from the time the first unit arrives until the last unit leaves. The identity of the Incident Commander may change, but there is always an IC in charge of the operation and responsible for everything that happens. Each person should answer to only ONE supervisor (Unity of Command), while each supervisor should supervise no more than FIVE people (Span of Control).

### **Assuming Command**

The first arriving unit at an incident should take command of the scene by notifying dispatch on the radio. This person may not necessarily remain the IC throughout the incident.

### **Passing Command**

If a unit arrives on scene first, and a compelling reason prevents that person from assuming or remaining command, he/she should pass command to the next arriving unit. This usually takes place over the radio. For example, fire, rescue or patient care needs may immediately need to be handled, there may not be enough personnel on scene yet, and the first arriving unit may need to be involved in the fire, rescue or patient care efforts. In this situation, the first arriving unit should state, over the radio, that he/she is passing command to the next arriving unit.

### **Transfer of Command**

Transfer of Command occurs when one person relinquishes command of an incident to another individual. For example, some departments may require the highest-ranking officer in their department to be the IC of an incident in their coverage area. In this case, the first arriving unit would take command, then transfer command to the officer upon his/her arrival. Transfer of Command should always take place face-to-face.

### **Jurisdictional Authority**

Departments are assigned a coverage area in which they provide services. However, many times more than one department may be dispatched to the same incident (for example, a house fire). The first arriving unit should assume command of the incident, but command should be transferred to the first arriving unit of the department assigned to the coverage area in which the incident has occurred. In some cases, the department assigned to the particular coverage area may allow the first arriving unit, regardless of which department they are affiliated with, to remain IC of the incident because they arrived first and established command. However, if a unit or department responds outside of their assigned coverage area, they should respect the authority of the department assigned to the coverage area, and either offer to transfer command, or transfer command upon request of a unit affiliated with the department to which the coverage area is assigned.

### **Unified Command**

In cases where multiple departments/agencies are involved in the same incident, the concept of Unified Command may be established. Unified Command means that Incident Command is actually comprised of a representative from each of the departments/agencies involved. When utilizing Unified Command, the departments unite in a cooperative effort in order to manage the incident. For example, at a large fire, the chiefs of each responding department may form a Unified Command and cooperatively manage the incident. Or, at a pipeline explosion, Emergency Management, Fire Departments, EMS, county officials, and government agencies may all be involved. A representative from each department/agency could comprise a Unified Command.

Every aspect of ICS does not necessarily have to be in place at each and every incident. Depending upon the severity and size of the incident, the ICS organization may be simple or complex. For example, at a small incident the IC may not assign an Operations Section, but instead take on the duties of the Operations Section himself/herself. Likewise, different departments may prefer different methods of ICS when running their scenes. This ICS guideline is intended as a basic framework by which Fire and EMS departments in Chambers County may become familiar with a similar Incident Command System, in the event that multiple agencies become involved in an incident.

Information and definitions for the above ICS examples were gathered from:

- ♦ International Association of Fire Chiefs & National Fire Protection Association (2004). Fundamentals of Fire Fighter Skills. Sudbury, MA: Jones and Bartlett Publishers, Inc.
- ♦ NIMS ([www.nimsonline.com](http://www.nimsonline.com))

## Appendix C



# Emergency Services Complaint Policy

### **Purpose**

To establish a uniform policy by which complaints against fire departments and emergency medical service providers (Emergency Services) shall be submitted to Chambers County, and subsequently handled by the County.

### **Requirements for Submitting Complaints**

Any complaints submitted to Chambers County must be submitted in writing and must include the following information:

- Name of person submitting complaint;
- Contact information (address and phone number) of person submitting complaint;
- Specific information regarding the complaint, including date and time of occurrence, and names of those persons involved;

Anonymous complaints will not be accepted by Chambers County. Without the specific information listed above, and unless submitted in writing, complaints will not be considered as valid. Complaints should be submitted to the Emergency Services Coordinator, who will keep Commissioner's Court reasonably informed.

### **Complaints Pertaining to Possible DSHS (formerly TDH) Violations**

Chambers County will not be the authority in determining if a specific complaint is a violation of DSHS (TDH) rules and regulations. If complaints received by the county indicate a possible violation of DSHS rules and regulations, they will be forwarded to DSHS for investigation. DSHS also requires all of the information listed above under "Requirements for Submitting Complaints" to be present in order to investigate the complaint. After investigating, DSHS will then inform the county as to whether a violation of state rules and regulations has occurred.